

## II. AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1. (Currently Amended) An isolated nucleic acid polynucleotide native to coryneform bacteria, comprising a polynucleotide nucleotide sequence[[,.]] selected from the group consisting of:

- a) ~~a polynucleotide at least 90% 95% identical to a polynucleotide that encodes a polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2; and~~
- b) ~~a polynucleotide that encodes a polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence at least 90% 95% identical to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2~~
- a) a nucleotide sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO: 1;
- b) a nucleotide sequence encoding a polypeptide as set forth in SEQ ID NO: 2;
- c) a nucleotide sequence complementary to (a) or (b).

Claims 2-7. (Cancelled)

Claim 8. (Currently Amended) A vector pCR2.1citAint, comprising:

- a) an internal fragment of the citA gene having a length of ~~[[480]]~~ 481 bp, as set forth in SEQ ID NO:3,
- b) the restriction map of which is reproduced in figure 1; and
- c) deposited in the E. coli strain Top10/pCR2.1citAint (DSM No. 13998).

Claim 9. (Currently Amended) An internal fragment of the citA gene having a length of 480 basepairs 481 bp, as set forth in SEQ ID NO:3.

Claims 10-20. (Cancelled)

Claim 21. (Currently Amended) An isolated ~~polynucleotide~~ nucleic acid consisting of a fragment of at least 30 consecutive nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:1 ~~or the full complement thereof or the fragment of at least 30 consecutive nucleotides of the full complement of SEQ ID NO: 1.~~

Claims 22 and 23. (Cancelled)

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Claim 24. (New) An isolated nucleic acid comprising a nucleic acid sequence that is at least 90% identical to the sequence of the nucleic acid of claim 1 and encodes a polypeptide having sensor kinase activity.

Claim 25. (New) An isolated nucleic acid that encodes a polypeptide having sensor kinase activity and hybridizes to the complement of the nucleic acid of claim 1 under the following stringent conditions: a final wash of 0.5X SSC at 68°C.

Claim 26. (New) A vector comprising a nucleic acid molecule of any one of claims 1, 24, and 25.

Claim 27. (New) A host cell comprising the vector of claim 26.

Claim 28. (New) The host cell of claim 27 that is a prokaryotic cell.